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## THE KENTUCKY MOUNTAINS AND THEIR FEUDS.

### I. THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY.

KENTUCKY has an unenviable reputation as a state of feuds and private fights. Christmas day, 1900, thirty deaths occurred in the state from violent causes. To most people it deserves its Indian name of "Dark and Bloody Hunting-Ground." Its mountain feuds have attracted wide attention in recent years. They have died out in all other parts of the country, but persist here. It is sociologically interesting to ask why. I shall endeavor to show that the Kentuckian inherits a virulent form of the fighting spirit of the pioneers, and that the environment of the mountain people has made possible the persistence of blood revenge here, when it has disappeared elsewhere.

### THE MOUNTAIN REGION.

John Fiske says: "Whether the community will remain barbarous or become civilized depends to a great extent upon environing circumstances." The conditions prevailing in the Kentucky mountain region today illustrate this law so evidently that a description of the region will make it apparent.

Kentucky, like "all Gaul," may be divided into three parts—the western or Pennyroyal, the central or Blue Grass, and the eastern or mountainous. The whole state contains some 41,283 square miles, and the eastern part is something like one-third of the whole. The Big Sandy river divides it from West Virginia

on the northeast and flows into the Ohio; the Licking and Kentucky rivers come from its center and flow westward; the Cumberland takes its rise in the eastern part and flows southwest. It must not be thought that these are broad, navigable streams. They head back in the mountains and drain the region; but the term "river" is a misnomer as applied to the parts of their



MOUNTAIN HOUSE WITH CHIMNEY BUILT OF STICKS AND DAUBED WITH CLAY.

courses which lie in the mountains. They would better be termed "creeks"—brawling torrents in winter, almost dry in summer. Their long, narrow valleys and innumerable little tributaries divide the country into distinct districts, cut off from one another by intervening mountains. Communications go by these streams, and the directions given to travelers are "up the 'creek' to its 'fork' and along that to its 'branch.'"

This mountain region of Kentucky, with eastern Tennessee, northeastern Alabama, northwestern Georgia, western North Carolina, western Virginia, and southwestern West Virginia—

constituting what Dr. Frost calls the "back-yard" of these states—is one of the largest horse-back areas left in all the world. It contains some two million acres. Practically pioneer conditions have prevailed until today throughout this vast region. It has been called "a retarded frontier"—the last one left in our country, for the stream of migration from east of the Appalachians, which more than a century ago settled these mountains, pushed on to the Mississippi, and before the middle of the century touched the shores of the Pacific. The great stretch of territory from the Alleghanies to the Rockies and the Rockies to the Pacific has been firmly knit together and connected with the eastern seaboard by boat and rail. It has never lost its touch with the older states, and has never been forgotten by them. But no steamboat can penetrate into the Kentucky mountains; until recently there was not a railroad; and today there is not a single well-made wagon road. Like Rip Van Winkle, this region went to sleep while life flowed around it and beyond, and while the rest of the country was experiencing those wonderful changes that make it so different today from what it was a century ago. It is a case of arrested development in civilization, and a most interesting one. It must be studied as such. President Frost has aptly termed the inhabitants "our contemporary ancestors."

#### SETTLEMENT.

Migration from the older states to the land west of the Alleghanies was, owing to the exigencies of the country, along three well-defined routes, and along the same parallels of latitude on which it started. People from New England went by the Mohawk river and the Great Lakes; those from the middle eastern states went down the Ohio river; those from Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina came through the Cumberland gap. This latter break in the mountains is in the southeastern part of Kentucky—where it touches Tennessee and Virginia—and is the only break from the Ohio river to the southern part of Tennessee. It was through here that most of the Kentucky settlers came. Some of them passed on up to the Blue Grass region,

which was naturally the first to fill up, as it was the fairest. Some of them, however, stopped in the mountains. After the Revolutionary War Virginia rewarded her soldiers with grants of land in what was Kentucky county. This mountain section then filled up somewhat more, though its population has always been sparse.

It has been suggested that the settlers in this part of the state were mainly from the indentured class, the "poor white trash" of Virginia. This contention seems unwarranted. Their connection can be traced, on the one hand, with the inhabitants of the "settlement"—as the Blue Grass region was called—and with the substantial people of Virginia, on the other. Probably no other equal area in the United States has such a homogeneous Anglo-Saxon population as this. The constant recurrence of good British names has often been remarked. Given the people, the conditions under which they settled this section, a knowledge of its topography, and its history is almost foretold. With a rough mountainous country, a not over-generous soil, no waterways, no roads, no communication with the outside world, it has experienced the lethargy of an Epimenidean sleep while the rest of the country was undergoing a startling transformation. The following family history, taken from the *Berea Quarterly* of November, 1899, is not true in the sense of using the right names, but is true as being typical:

John Gabbard was a reading and psalm-singing Englishman, who came to America because Cromwell was dead, and because he was too stubborn to attend the established church.

His son Adam learned to read, write, and cipher, and served under Washington in the Revolutionary War. After the war, like most young men, he went west. He thought of going to western New York, but concluded that the climate was too cold. He visited Pittsburg, and came near buying land in Pennsylvania, but finally made a purchase in a rich river bottom in western Virginia, where he settled and reared a family of twelve children. Before the war he had married a Scotch-Irish girl named Elspeth McAfee.

His son David, born in 1766, had few school privileges, but learned to read, write, and cipher. He was of an enterprising disposition, and when twenty-one years old he married Nancy Lincoln and took up a claim 175 miles west of his father in another rich valley. They made the wedding

journey on horseback and carried no books except a Bible, a catechism, and a small life of Washington. David was an Indian fighter, and soon after the birth of his fourth child he was killed while following Daniel Boone on a distant excursion.

His son, Daniel Gabbard, never saw a schoolhouse, never learned to read, and never undertook the long trip to visit kinsfolk in the East and see the improvements in the towns and "settled parts." He early took his father's place as head of the family, and divided the "boundary" with his brothers and sister into four portions of about two hundred acres each.

His children, sixteen in number, had a new experience. Their father had lost the art of reading which had been in the family for three generations, but he had been a man of substance. The children never really thought of learning to read, and they acquired less skill in wood-craft and household arts. But, what was more significant, as their father had but two hundred acres of land, and there was no more valley land to be had, they were forced to find homes on the thin soil and steep slopes of the mountains. They lived and died in entire isolation. Several of them were killed in feuds and quarrels. The one whom we know, Palestine Gabbard, born about 1820, is now keeping a moonshine still on Hell for Sartin Creek.

His son, Bud Gabbard, "toddlin' when the Mexican war was," went down the Kentucky river on a raft of logs in 1861, and found that another war was in progress. He enjoyed fighting, and embraced the opportunity to enlist in the Union army. He was disorderly in camp, but a most effective "bummer" in Sherman's march to the sea. He came back from the army with larger ideas than his father or his grandfather ever had, and when the free-school system was set up he became a school trustee. At first he united with the other trustees in selling the school to the highest bidder and pocketing the proceeds. But four years ago a Berea student taught in an adjoining district, and the school became so interesting that Bud determined to have a better teacher in his district. Then the idea came to him that he might have his daughter Sarepta educated to teach that school. He "studied about it a heap," but might have gone no farther, had he not heard one of the "extension lectures" one court day at the county seat. He determined to use whatever he could get for an extra lot of hogs the next season for Sarepta's education. But there was a disease among the swine, and the whole matter was deferred another year.

Then came the question of Sarepta's own "notions." She was fifteen, and several boys were "talkin' to her right peart." But it chanced that Mrs. Yocum was riding that way giving Bible readings and visiting the schools, and her horse cast a shoe near Bud Gabbard's cabin. Mrs. Yocum was invited in, and stayed all night, and Sarepta's destiny was settled. She and the folks "allowed" she should go to Berea.

Sarepta Gabbard is quite unconscious of her pedigree, but this daughter

of Bud's, the Union veteran, Palestine the moonshiner, Daniel the backwoodsman, David the Indian fighter, and Adam the revolutionary soldier, as she rides timidly into Berea, with her white sunbonnet and woolen mitts, will be a joy and a problem to her teachers.

#### OCCUPATIONS.

1. *Agriculture*.—The region as a whole is that of a simple farming community. Corn, oats, and potatoes are the principal



HOME-MADE WATER MILL.

produce, while tobacco, flax, and cotton hold a minor place. All are grown in small quantities, owing partly to the lack of markets and partly to the nature of the soil. The valleys are narrow and subject to overflow; the hills are steep and stony or wooded. The farms may be divided into three general classes: the valley farm, the bottom farm, and the hillside or upright farm. The latter sometimes run almost to the summit of the hill, and are so steep that it seems impossible to plow them. It was while working on such a farm, according to a well-worn tradition, that a farmer fell out of his field and broke his neck.

The land, unless its value is enhanced by mineral deposits or valuable wood, is worth from \$3 to \$7 per acre. A company recently bought a tract of land on Gilbert Creek in Clay county for \$3 per acre. They sold the poplar trees on it, averaging one to the acre, for \$3.75 each. A similar deal took place on Greasy Creek, the trees selling for \$2.75 each. The bottom farms generally rent for one-half the gross yield, and the upright



MOONSHINE STILL CUT UP BY OFFICERS, WHO KILLED THE MAN RUNNING IT AND MORTALLY WOUNDED HIS CONFEDERATE.

farms for one-third, or, in money, something like 50 cents per acre.

2. *Distilling*.—The Whisky Rebellion of 1794 finds its counterpart in the long and desperate struggle which has been carried on in the mountains of Kentucky against the revenue officers. The cause is the same in both cases—lack of a market for the raw material. Corn, rye, and apples find a market when made into “moonshine” whisky, while there would be no demand for them as corn and rye and apples. Of course, there is also the desire for intoxicants, which would exist even if there were a good market for the farm products; but if there were a market,



and if there were more social activity, there would be less "moonshine."

Many of the counties have voted no-license to saloons. The people grew tired of the lawlessness and uncertainty growing out of the open sale of liquor. Of course, this does not mean that it cannot be had by the knowing ones, but it is more difficult. A member of the Baker faction in Clay county is said to have declared that three drinks of "mountain dew" cause, on the average, one fight.

The moonshining is now done on a very small scale and only in the remote districts. A few years ago thirteen moonshiners were arrested at a commencement at Berea College. They are said to have an association for mutual protection, and several men are reported to have been killed by them for giving information. Only a short time ago (January, 1901) a revenue officer and a part of his posse were ambushed and killed while going to arrest some moonshiners. It is undoubtedly true that most people are afraid to give any information or take any steps to break up the unlawful pursuit. Someone pointed out to me a woman riding horseback and carrying a meal-sack with something heavy and round in each end. It was in Jackson county. She was said to be the widow of a minister taking some of her own moonshine to a convenient spot to dispose of it. That some of the people do not regard it in any other light than that of a business is illustrated by the story of the man in Jackson county who wanted a magistrate to give him a warrant to recover some moonshine whisky that had been stolen!

3. *Logging*.—Until within the last few years this section had a magnificent forest. It was claimed in 1890 that the state had the second best hard-wood forest in the union. The greater part is in this mountainous region. Within recent years nearly all the poplar trees have been cut and floated out to market. They are "snaked" by means of oxen from the spot on which they are felled to the nearest stream of water. This is not generally large enough to float them, even in times of high water, so splash-dams are built. These back up the water until it becomes deep enough and strong enough to carry off the large logs. Then

the dam is knocked out, and the logs go with a boom to the larger streams and on out to the mills. Poplar, being light timber, has been practically all cut, but the other woods have not been so easily conveyed, and consequently have not been made away with to such an extent. But the destructive process known as "deadening" has cleared off much of the land in order to make way for a scanty growth of corn. Wherever accessible to the railroads, these trees are cut up by portable sawmills and carried out to market. Thousands of magnificent trees have been felled for their bark alone, leaving millions of feet of choice lumber rotting on the ground. Annual fires are made that destroy the young timber, in order to get a little scanty grazing for a few cows. Professor Mason reports the following conversation with a man who was thus clearing his land of its fine timber. When asked what use he was going to put the land to, the man replied: "Hit is mighty producin' ground, though some of it lays tolerably steep." When asked why he didn't let the young poplars grow up into a forest, he replied: "A fellow wouldn't live to get any saw timber out of that." When asked where the trees were to come from during the next hundred years to take the place of these cut down, and to furnish the needed supply of wood, he said: "There hain't a-goin' to be none;" and then he added: "They'll have to look out for that."

4. *Mining*.—This section is also rich in undeveloped coal fields. Proctor, the state geologist, estimates that there are 11,180 acres in the eastern Kentucky coal field, and he says it is the largest area of persistently workable high-grade bituminous coal in the United States. It is no uncommon thing to find for mile after mile each family with its own coal bed, from which the coal is dug as it is needed.

Natural gas is not uncommon, and clays of excellent qualities are met with. The coal, gas, and clays are as yet practically unexploited and are destined to be the foundation of great industrial progress.

One unfortunate accompaniment of the beginning of progress in this section is the passing of so much of the land into the hands of outside capitalists. Lack of resources and ignorance

of markets and conditions in the industrial world make the mountain people unable to develop what they have. They sell their farms readily enough when a good price is offered, and buy or rent another, or turn around and work for the company that has bought them out. The companies very generally operate their own stores, forcing the employés to trade with them, often advancing them provisions so as to keep them under obligations,



A GROUP OF HORSE TRADERS.

and always charging exorbitant prices. Outside capitalists seem absolutely necessary to develop the resources, but the mountain man is oftentimes at a loss to find where he is benefited.

5. *Stock-raising*.—Very little live stock is raised in the mountains. Hogs and cattle constitute by far the larger part of what is produced. The hillsides afford good grazing for sheep, but almost none are raised. The inaccessibility of markets explains why. The stock must be driven on foot, over rough roads, a journey of several days before reaching a market in the outside world. In riding through the Kentucky mountains into West Virginia, I fell in with such a party and rode home with them. They came from up on the Big Sandy, and had driven their little

bunch of hogs and cattle and sheep to Mount Sterling, a distance of seventy-five miles. It took them a week to go and three days to return. Under such conditions do these people find a market, and at such disadvantages are they placed competing with those who are not restricted to a single market and who are scarcely ever a dozen miles from a railroad.

#### HOUSES.

The home is everywhere one of the best criterions of wealth and social position. The pretentiousness of the family dwelling in the mountains is the basis of social distinction. The pioneer log cabin of one room is the simplest form of house. It is built of hewn or unhewn logs. It has one door and no windows; the chinks are daubed with mud, the roof covered with long, home-made shingles. The simplest form of chimney is that built of sticks, daubed with clay inside and out. In time, they bend to one side, giving the building a queer appearance. The more common chimney now is built of stone.

After the one-room cabin comes the two-room. It consists, sometimes, of two rooms under one roof, with an open space between, called a "dog-trot." Again, there may be a porch or gallery, or even a kitchen, built apart from the rest of the house. Other rooms may be added, until you get the occasional two-story frame, or even brick, house of the towns.

In the rudest cabins practically no attempt is made at ornamentation. The simplest decorations consist of newspapers cut or notched into different shapes and hung around the walls. Then come cheap chromos or other illustrations. There are almost no books, or magazines, or paintings, or curtains, or shades. The furniture is of the simplest description. A few split-bottom chairs, a table or two, some shelves, and a number of beds constitute almost the sole furnishings.

#### EATING.

"Hog and hominy" furnish the substantial course of every meal, and almost the only course. Fat salt bacon, called "sow-belly," swimming in grease, is the meat relied upon at all seasons,

while corn bread furnishes the staff of life. Flour and baking powder biscuits are sometimes attempted, but, being heavy and soggy, and only half-cooked, they are not a welcomed variation. The butter looks like and tastes like a white, insipid cheese, and is used but little. The coffee is strong and black, served without milk, and frequently without "sweetening." There is either "short sweetening"—a cheap, brown sugar—or "long sweetening"—home-made molasses. Vegetables are not used very freely, and little is attempted in the way of dessert. The table utensils are very crude. A dirty oil-cloth generally serves for table-covering, and napkins are unknown. The woman usually stands and serves while the men eat.

The natives never look well-fed, though they seem to get along pretty well on such fare. But the stranger is reminded of the Athenian who visited the Spartan camp, saw the plain black broth which formed the sole food of that martial people, and remarked that he was now able to understand the well-known disregard of life displayed by the Spartans. As Mr. Vincent says: "Corn pone, bacon, and fried chicken sound appetizing enough in print, but they vary in attractiveness with different parts of the South."

#### HOSPITALITY.

The open-handed hospitality of the Kentucky people is well known. While it has died out to a considerable extent in other parts of the state, it still flourishes in the mountains. The reason is apparent. The isolated, monotonous life of a backwoods community makes diversion welcome. A stranger may be the bearer of news, which will be discussed months after he is gone, for the apparent listlessness of the people in his presence is deceptive. Every move he makes, every word he lets fall, is stored up, and brought forth after his departure.

There are no inns between the towns, but one never hesitates to ride up to any house along the road and ask for accommodation. Seldom is it refused. Frequently he is accosted with: "Houdy, stranger! 'Light and hitch yer beasties." Fifteen, sometimes twenty-five, cents is charged for a meal, frequently nothing at all, and one is often urged to remain as long as he will.

But I heard complaints of the abuse of this generous hospitality. It was said that many men pass half their time visiting, going on from place to place as they wear out their welcome, and that the latchstring was, consequently, being more and more withdrawn. This is probably due more to economic reasons than to any other.

#### COMMUNICATION.

The mountains vary in height from 1,000 to 4,000 feet. The sharp ridges are separated by long, narrow valleys, through which run streams varying in size according to the season. The villages are strung along these streams at infrequent intervals. The only communication is along the valleys. In the spring the deep mud and swollen streams cut off travel for days at a time, for turnpikes and bridges are quite unknown. The communities are thus very remotely connected with each other. They seek relations with the nearest city outside of the mountains, with which they keep up communications by the periodic visits of merchants, by raftsmen who go out with the logs, and by the occasional visits of strangers.

The roads are along or through the streams. It is no uncommon thing to cross and recross a stream a dozen times in a few miles, and, as there are no bridges, it has to be done by fording. When the rivers are swollen by the spring rains, or frozen, crossing becomes almost impossible. The roads are rough to an almost incredible degree. They are not graded at all, and seldom worked. Loose rock and large boulders and deep ruts are abundant. It doesn't take long to shake a wagon to pieces, and, of course, the loads carried are light, 1,200 to 1,500 pounds being considered a fair load for a two-horse team. Sometimes the roads are so narrow in places that it is impossible for two teams to pass each other. I know of one case in which the wheels had to be taken off of the inner wagon, which was then turned up on its side, so that the other one might pass. Bells are frequently put upon the teams to give warning of their approach.

The hauling is done by two-horse teams or oxen. Frequently they are hitched to home-made carts or sleds. Professor Shaler

says he saw, years ago, while upon a geological expedition in the remote districts, a cart with stone wheels and solid axle.

The travel is nearly all done on horseback. A buggy or carriage is almost unknown. Men and women alike use the saddlebags as commonly as they were used in the Blue Grass region a hundred years ago.

Not a stream penetrating this great section is navigable for steamboats. But there are "push-boats," which convey goods far into the interior, where the railroads do not penetrate and the roads are particularly bad. They are worked by the simple and laborious method of a pole at the side or back of the boat pushing it forward. When going up-stream their progress is slow and wearisome. Logan Court House, across the Kentucky line, in West Virginia, receives a considerable part of its goods this way. It is only twelve miles from the railroad, but the roads are so wretched that the push-boats are still able to maintain a vigorous competition. They carry goods from the mouth of the Guyandotte river, 100 miles, for 50 cents per hundred. They can bring 20,000 pounds in a single load, and it takes about a week to make the up trip.

In recent years railroads have begun to tap the mountain region. The Norfolk & Western runs close to the Kentucky and West Virginia line from north to south; the Kentucky Eastern goes in near the center from Lexington; and the Louisville & Nashville strikes the southern part. But these roads are far apart. They are after the more accessible timber and minerals. They do not touch many towns, and their socializing influence is not considerable. Some people are to be found in the remote regions who have never seen the "steam-cars," many who have never been on them, and any number who have never been fifty miles from home. Some of the commonest features of life in the outside world are missing. Newspapers and daily mails do not exist; bananas are practically unknown, and oranges are seen, if at all, only at Christmas time. A few denominational and agricultural papers, mostly weeklies, may be found in the more prosperous homes, but there are many that never see a paper of any kind. Their ideas of the outside world

are necessarily shadowy and attenuated. As to what is going on in the big world of affairs they have practically no conception. Mr. Vincent quotes a man as saying in regard to the war with Spain: "I reckon we mountaineers wouldn't know much about a war if there was one;" and a woman who said she had heard her "old man" say that someone had read in a paper that England and France were going to begin a war the next morn-



McKEE, COUNTY SEAT OF JACKSON COUNTY.

ing. And she added with apprehensive uncertainty: "There be a France, ain't there?"

#### TOWNS.

The towns are little more than aggregations of houses. The only business is keeping store and post-office and hotel. They sometimes have a town government, but more frequently have no organization distinct from that of the county. An example or two will best show their condition.

McKee, the county seat of Jackson county, is a straggling little group of houses holding some fifteen families. It is not incorporated, and seems to get along just as well without any distinct government of its own. There is not a church, nor a printing press, nor a brick building, nor a street lamp, nor a



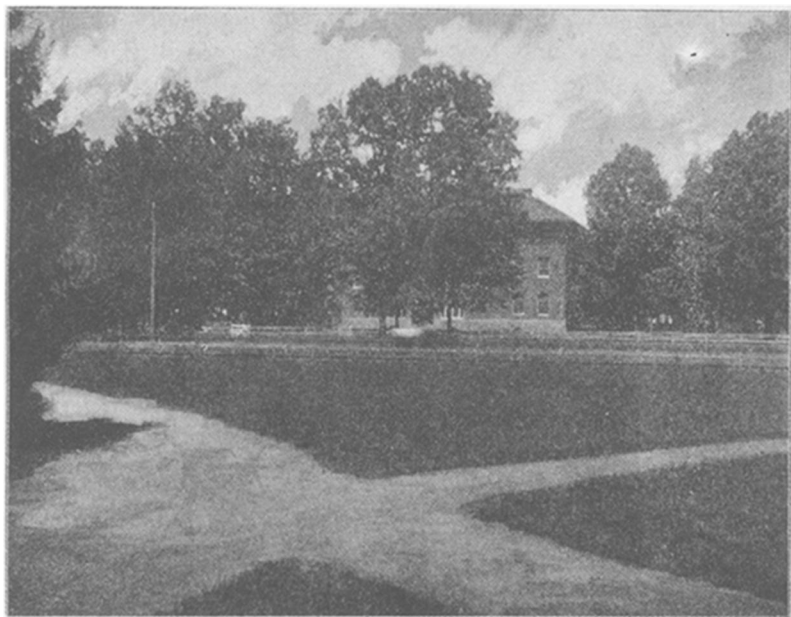
sidewalk in the place. The nearest doctor is twelve miles away, and the nearest railroad twenty-five.

Hyden, the county seat of Leslie county, enjoys the distinction of at least being chartered by the state legislature, but, not realizing any advantage from its town government, it has allowed its organization to fall into desuetude. Commodities from the outside world come high at Hyden. They have to be brought a long distance from the railroad and over rough roads. Coal oil is worth 40 cents a gallon; flour, \$1 to \$1.25 per twenty-five pound bag or "poke," as it is called; bacon, 10 cents to 12 cents per pound. There are no bananas, and oranges come but once a year. Trades are so undifferentiated that one man displays the sign "blacksmith and jeweler." There is much about these straggling little villages in the remote regions to suggest the "cow towns" of the plains a few years ago. At Hyden, a fellow who had grown tired of the competitive struggle in the outside world thought he would introduce a barber shop. He rigged up a chair out of a dry-goods box, sharpened an old razor, got some strong alum, and was ready for work. His first customer was a big backwoods-man who had just come to town, and had a thick, tough beard of several weeks' growth. The improvised barber hacked and hewed away until he finally got the beard off. He then slapped the solution of alum and hot water on the smarting face. This was the limit. The mountain man had never been shaved before, and he thought the barber was trying to burn his face off. With a terrific yell he jumped backward over the chair, drew his gun, and started after the fleeing tonsorial artist, who was last seen disappearing over the hill.

Disreputable characters are not generally tolerated in the country — they are told to "move on," but they congregate in the larger towns. Sometimes the towns are taken possession of for a short time by toughs who drink and shoot, and overawe the quieter citizens. Kuklux parties are sometimes formed and administer upon obnoxious characters. Anything of any kind that furnishes a diversion is welcomed, for time is nothing, the standard of living is low, and life is cheap.

## SCHOOLS.

Education throughout this region is of the most elementary kind. The three R's still constitute the standard in many places. While most of the people are engaged in agriculture only, and life is still simple, the practical value of training is hard to realize, and its culture value is still less patent. In some of the



BEREA COLLEGE.

better towns brick schoolhouses have of late years been erected, and sometimes two or even three teachers are employed; but for the most part the schoolhouse is still of the pioneer type — one room, built of unhewn logs, benches without backs, no desks, maps, charts, or any of the other furnishings of a modern city schoolroom.

The teacher is generally some young boy or girl of the neighborhood, with just enough knowledge to pass the county examinations, and who drops into teaching as the readiest way of starting life. He rarely expects to continue at it. The school

period lasts only three to five months. During the rest of the year he "grows a crop" or does anything else that may come to hand. The state appropriation averages about \$2.50 per capita. Often the districts contain as many as one hundred pupils of school age, with fifty to seventy-five in attendance. All these in one room and under one inexperienced teacher!

I attended such a school on "Thousand Stick" mountain. There was a great room full of children of all ages. All were barefooted. A young boy of sixteen, with a third-grade certificate, was teaching. The class in second reader was out on the floor. There were ten of them, drawn up in line, with only one book for the whole class. Each took turn in reading, the teacher moving down the line, correcting.

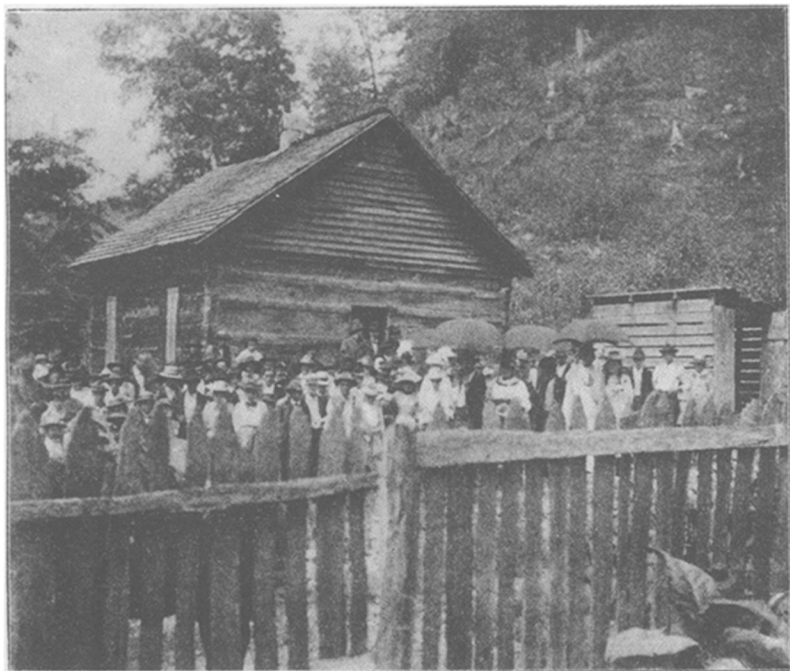
Berea College is proving an immense stimulus to education in this section of the mountains. The more enterprising teachers come to Berea for study when their schools are not in session. They carry back far more than just what they get from books. The college is also sending out teachers and preachers and singers in what it calls its "university-extension" work. President Frost tells of being out on one of these trips and meeting a splendid specimen of physical manhood cutting trees. He said to the woodsman: "It is 1897 years since what?" to which the unabashed answer was: "I never heard tell." The curiosity of the mountain people is, perhaps, no greater than that of other people, but they do not see any indelicacy in asking very pointed questions. One is sometimes accosted with: "Who might you-all be?" "Whar are ye aimin' ter go?" "What brings ye up this air way?" "Whar do you live at?" "How old be ye?" At an "institute" held in Leslie county a few years ago one of the teachers missed every one of the fifty words taken from a college paper and could not form the letter *Z*! Berea is doing wonders, however, for the whole country.

#### CHURCHES.

The church is the most important social institution in the mountains. It furnishes the only regular means of friendly gatherings. Here occurs the discussion of neighborhood affairs, crops,

gossip, and even business and "frolics," that in a more developed community find other times and places for expression.

The principal sects are the evangelical denominations of Methodist, Christian or Campbellites, and Baptist. The latter is split into four well-defined groups with much animosity, if not



A FOOT-WASHING SERVICE OF THE HARDSHELL BAPTISTS ON THE MUD FORK OF ISLAND CREEK.

theological difference, between them—the Free Will, the Hardshell, the Missionary, and the United. It is said that the ministers of the latter sect will not take money, but follow the injunction of retaining neither wallet nor scrip.

Theological controversies are rife. To hate the other denomination is more important than to hate sin. The theology is largely drawn from the Old Testament. The people are very fond of discussing these subjects, and, aside from the topics immediately connected with their occupations, the conversation

turns to theology more frequently than to any other. They still have the church 'debates that were so common over the rest of Kentucky fifty years ago. For a preacher of one denomination to "corner" another is considered the best use he can make of his theological training.

A Baptist preacher in Morgan county attempted to set the churches in apostolic order, not long ago. He called for a union of the churches on the "Bible, God, and Christ, for the church of God and the church of Christ is repeated nine times in the New Testament." A rival preacher laid his Bible on the floor, jumped on it with both feet, and declared "he was standing on the Bible." The first preacher contended that a man could be perfect—without sin; the second preacher, that he could not. Finally, according to my informers, the second preacher told all kinds of lies on the first; he tried to entangle him with a woman; but the first one "fit sin," and would have come out victorious had the meeting not been broken up by toughs.

I attended a foot-washing service of the United Baptists on the Mud Fork of Island Creek. It was held in a one-room log schoolhouse. The inside was packed with women, and the yard was filled with men and boys who looked in through the windows. There were two preachers officiating. One preached for an hour and a half, then the other took it up. The sermons were full of vague generalities. The illustrations were taken nearly altogether from the Old Testament. One of the preachers said that the command to wash one another's feet was given by the Lord to the fathers, by the fathers to the sons, and so on down to us. "It is the 'speerit' of aristocracy," he declared, "an institution of the devil, that makes us ashamed to do it." Two new deacons were chosen at this meeting, and the questions proposed to them before the congregation to test their fitness were: "How many living wives have you, Brother?" "Do you rule your own household?"

The pillars of the church are called on to testify. The testimony takes the form of declaring how lost in sin one was before he found the Lord, and how since that he has been freed from

sin. Then follows a general handshaking, everybody coming forward to shake hands with the preacher. The preacher "lines out" a well-known hymn, which is then sung by the congregation. The singing is rather slow and monotonous, with a nasal accompaniment, and in the minor key.

The sectarianism is in proportion to ignorance, and this is sometimes unfathomable. President Frost tells of meeting one of these preachers who had been away for three months at a theological school. "Yas," he said, "the seminary is a good place ter go and git rested up, but 'tain't while fer me ter go thar nomore's long as I've got good wind." Good wind is certainly a necessary qualification for a successful mountain preacher, for he is expected to preach as long as the "speirit" lasts—generally hours. He throws in a little aspirate like *er* or *ah*, when he warms up, which produces the "holy tone." An old minister one day was exhorting his brethren to repentance. "Oh, brethren," said he, "repent ye, and repent ye of your sins, er; fur if ye don't, er, the Lord, er, he will grab yer by the seat of yer pants, er, and hold yer over hell fire till ye holler like a coon." The following is a mountain sermon reported by a Berea student in the college *Quarterly*:

#### A MOUNTAIN SERMON.<sup>1</sup>

"My brethering, you'll fine my tex' somers in the Bible, an' I haint agoin ter tell yer whar: but hit's thar. Ef yer don't believe hit, you jest take down yer Bible an' hunt twell yer fine hit, an' you'll fine a heap more thet's good, too. My tex' is this: 'On this rock will I build my church, an' the gates of hell shall not prevail against hit.'

"Now, I'm goin' ter speak the truth ter-day, no matter who hit hits. Ef they's ary man in this aujience thet don't agree with me, thet's his lookout, an' not mine. The question fur us ter answer 'bout this tex' is this: Wut

<sup>1</sup>No single discourse should be taken as fairly representative of an entire people. This sermon contains the usual topics—doctrine, experience (the most saving element), and reproof of the church. While lacking in refinement, and exhibiting that "zeal which is not according to knowledge," its manly vigor will command respect. The language abounds in quaint idioms, and Saxon survivals like the pronoun "hit."

The Hardshell Baptists, while numerous, are not at present a rapidly growing body, and are being supplanted by "Missionary Baptists," "Christians" or "Reformers," and the like.

church war hit thet the Lord founded? Wut church is hit thet the gates of hell haint agoin' ter prevail against? I'm agoin' ter answer thet question; an' I'll tell yer wut church hit is; hit's the Ole Hardshell Babtist church; thet's wut church hit is.

"A heap o' people says hit war the Christian church. Well, hit warn't. The Campbellites says they're Christians; the Methodis' says, 'We're Christians, too.' Wall, I haint a Christian: I'm a Babtist. I fine in the Bible thet the disciples war fust called Christians at Antioch, not at Jerusalem. The Lord never called the church Christians, nur no person else thet had ary right ter gin the church a name. The Lord founded the church when he went down inter the warter, an' the gates of hell shall not prevail against hit.

"Neow, they's a heap o' people don't lack the doctring of this hyur church cuz we teach predestination. Now I wantel tell you. Them folks is jist lack a ole hoss-ah! You fotch him out at night-ah! an' you go fur to carry him home-ah. An' you come up nigh onter a ole black stump-ah, a settin' by the side of the road-ah!

"An' wen the ole hoss sees hit he stops-ah! An' his yurs pints right straight at the stump-ah! an' every har on his back pints right straight at his yurs-ah! an' he says: 'There he is-ah! Thar's the booger-ah! Oh! he'll ruin me-ah!' An' thar he stan's-ah! with his laigs stiff lack fence-rails-ah! an' you caint git him apast that ole stump-ah! But ef you've got a good strong bridle-ah! yer kin git him up fernen hit-ah! an' then he gives a great snort, so—boo-oo! an' goes by hit with a jump-ah! an' twarn't nothin' but a stump none of the time. Now, brethering, they haint no more harm in the doctings of the ole Hardshell Babtist church-ah! than they is in thet ole stump-ah!

"Now look ahere-ah! We fine when we read the Scriptures of divine truth-ah! thet Solomon he built a temple-ah! an' he hed all the work done way off-ah! so they warn't no sound of hammer to be heerd at the building-ah! An' the timber war ahewed-ah! an' asquared-ah! an' aplumbed-ah! way out in the mountings-ah! an' then King Solomon he gin orders-ah! fur ter make the timbers up into raftis-ah! an float 'em down ter Joppy-ah! Now, jes' supposing some of them workmen hed a said-ah! one of the hewers o' wood, or drawers o' warter hed a said-ah: 'I'll squar' this timber-ah! an' I'll plumb hit-ah! but taint while fur me ter immerse hit all over in the warter-ah! I'll jis' take a little warter-ah! an' sprinkle on them timbers-ah! Thet'll do jist as well-ah! Hit taint no savin' orjince nohow-ah! How do yer reckon them timbers wud agot down ter Joppy-ah? An' ef the timber hadn't agot thar, how'd Solomon abuilt the temple-ah? An' now, ef you're atryin' ter get ter heaven-ah, how do you reckon you'll git thar ef you stay on the bank asprinklin' warter on yourself-ah! an' on lettle babies thet haint repented of thur sins-ah! stidder goin' down *into* the warter-ah? Do you reckon you'll ever git thar?

"No sir-ah! You mought as well make a church outer the devils in hell

as o' thet sorter people-ah! Fur on this rock I will build my church-ah! an' the gates of hell shall not prevail against hit-ah!

"But Oh! my brethering-ah! How well I remember-ah! jis' lack hit war yistidy-ah! the time wen I foun' the Lord-ah! A heap o' people sez they caint tell the time-ah! nur the place-ah! Wull, I reckon they caint-ah! 'kase they haint never aben no time an' place-ah! Ef a man's hed peace spoke to his never-dyin' soul, he kin mighty soon tell the time 'n' the place-ah! Oh! I remember hit well-ah! I war twenty-one an' agoin' on twenty-two years of age-ah! An' I went ter meeting-ah! an' I went home afeelin' mighty bad, kase some o' the gals hed slighted me-ah! kase I war lame-ah! An' I felt bad thet they wouldn't show me as much 'tention as t'other young men thet war cumridges o' mine-ah! An' agoin' hum-ah! I rode off by myself-ah! ter go hum by a roundabout way-ah! O my brethering-ah! I reckon I war afeeling sorter lack poor ole Joner-ah! lack I'd love to go off in the ships of Tarshish-ah! An' I felt jist lack I wouldn't akeered p'ticular ef hit hed aben the whale's belly-ah!

"Wull, I got out on the mounting-ah, an' 'peared lack I couldn't go home-ah. An' I got off my hoss an' sot down under a hick'ry tree-ah, afeelin' lack 'Lijah wen he sot under the juniper tree-ah, awishing he cud die-ah. An' awhilest I war thar, they come up a powerful big storm-ah, an' my nag got loose an' I couldn't ketch her, an' off she went fur home-ah! aleavin' me on the mounting-ah. Oh! my brethering, how hit thundered-ah! An' 'peared lack the hull sky war one streak o' lightenin'-ah. An' the limbs commenced ablowin' off'n the trees-ah! An' the trees began abendin'-ah! An' the warter came down in sheets-ah, an' wet me to the skin-ah! Now, I jist want to tell you I got over wantin' to die, mighty soon-ah! Oh! then I begun to realize thet they's somethin' comes after death-ah! An' I warn't ready fur hit-ah! Oh, my brethering, I thought I'd prayed before-ah, but I found thet night I hadn't never done it before-ah! I prayed an' prayed, an' every streak o' lightnin' I thought I could see an angry God above me, an' a yawnin' hell below me-ah! But right wile the storm war aragin'-ah, an' the lightnin' war aflashin'-ah, an' the thunder war acrackin'-ah, the Lord spoke peace to my never-dyin' soul-ah! I seed the lightnin', but hit didn't skeer me. I heerd the thunder, but I warn't afeard no more. I felt the rain soakin' me, but 'peared lack hit didn't wet me then. I jist felt lack singin', an' I sung an' prayed an' shouted thar all night, an' they found me in the mornin' an' come to whar I war by them ahearin' me asingin'. Thet were thirty-two years ago the fourteenth day o' this month, an' I kin jis' shet my eyes an' see the place whar I foun' the Lord. I cud go to thet ole hick'ry tree the darkest night the Lord ever made. An' wen they axed wut church I'd jine, I sez, sez I, 'Lemme jine the Babtist,' sez I; 'not the Missionary Babtist, nor the reg'lar Babtist, but the ole, Two Seed, Iron Jacket, Predestination, Hardshell Babtist-ah!' For on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against hit-ah.



But Oh! my brethering-ah! we fine that a heap of them thet's in the church is mighty nigh as bad as them thet's out, an' some Babtists haint much better 'n' other churches. The world's awaxin' wuss an' wuss, an' 'pears lack the eend haint fur off. Wy, the Babtists over in Laurel thar aroun' me is gettin' too stuck up to wash one another's feet. They uster hev foot-washin' reg'lar. But now I hev to go over into Whitley to get my feet washed. Wy brethering, wen the church was founded foot-washin' war a part on it; an' I do hate to see the Babtists-ah! agoin' back into the beggarly elements of the world-ah! For on this rock I will build my church-ah! an' the gates of hell shall not prevail against hit-ah!"

#### FUNERALS.

A curious practice prevails in regard to the funeral services, which generally do not take place at the time of the interment, but annually during the latter part of August. The crops are then laid by, the roads are passable, the kinsfolk have all been notified, and several preachers secured. Services are held at the same time and place for all who have died in a general district during the year. They last for several days, people come from a long way off, and they are the feature of the season. Those held in Laurence county during the summer of 1899 were attended by eight or ten preachers and three to four hundred people. A three-day meeting was held on George's Creek and two days on Tom's Creek. Three or four preachers spoke for each departed soul, unless more than one had gone from a single family. All the good qualities of the deceased were dwelt upon at length, and the hope he might have of heaven. I was told of a woman who had never "jined" the church, but who had died "a-shouting." There was considerable difference of opinion as to her chances for the next world.

#### POLITICS.

The absence of close political coöperation and the tendency to follow leaders in the old feudal way are interestingly apparent. The people are most conservative in their political ideas. Before the war there were but very few slaves in the mountains. There never was any sympathy with the doctrine of states' rights. When the war came on, therefore, the mountaineers were undivided in their attachment to the union, and from the

frequency with which the subject comes up one might imagine that the war was five years ago instead of thirty-five. Jackson county claims to have sent more men into the federal army in proportion to its population than any other county in the union. In the election of 1896 Jackson county was 96 per cent. Republican. This condition of things makes local politics "cut and dried," and national affairs are far off, so far that they never seem to enter into the consideration of the average man.

#### INTERMARRIAGE.

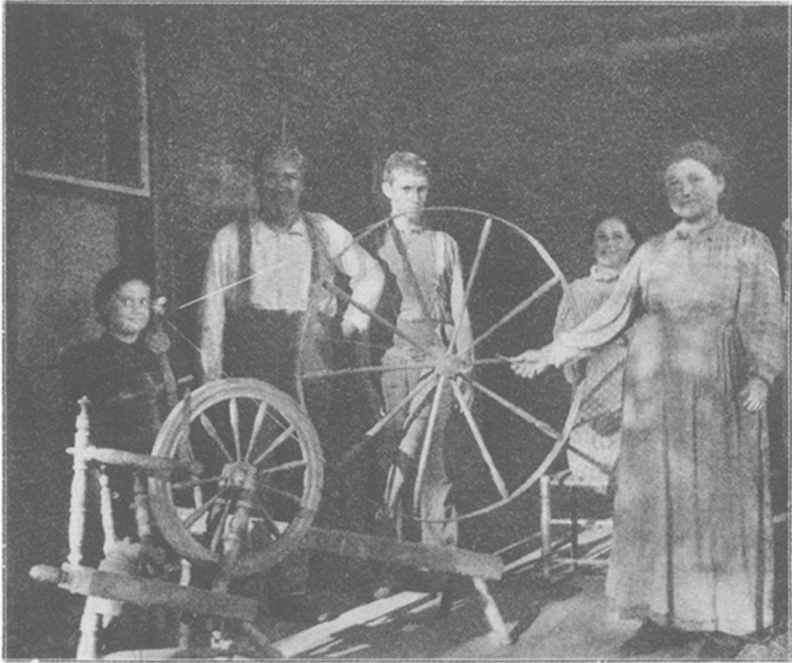
Owing to lack of knowledge of outside people, and of communication with them, intermarriage has taken place to an alarming extent. The sons and daughters of one family marry at an early age into another family in the neighborhood. This has now been going on so long that physical degeneration in such cases is perceptible. Scrofula and tuberculosis are met with in abundance. On the whole, however, the simple outdoor life of the people gives them good health. They do not look rugged, but their long gaunt forms are capable of great endurance. They will wade in the icy water all day long, working with the logs, and apparently are none the worse for it. I met a young lad of fourteen who had walked forty miles one day over a rough mountain road, killed a wild-cat, and thought it nothing wonderful.

Their nerves are unjaded, and they are prolific in offspring. The size of the average family is considerably higher than in the rest of the country, eight, ten, or twelve children in a family being often met with; and I knew of one family with seventeen children. Doctors are rare, and childbirth without medical attendance is the rule. There is a general belief in the potency of herbs and ointments. Sow-bugs or cockroaches are sometimes strung around children's necks as amulets. I heard of one witch-doctor.

#### HOME-MADE CLOTHING.

Among the most important by-products is that of the loom. It is no uncommon thing to find the highlanders of the back districts wearing clothing of their own making. Until the last

few years anything other than this was the exception, but now the cheap and better-finished store clothes are rapidly crowding out the home industry. The younger people seem ashamed of their self-made things, which are taken as the badges of poverty, and, slightly as the changes of fashion are regarded, the store clothes



SPINNING - WHEELS.

lend themselves more readily to these changes than do those made at home.

In most of the substantial homes a spinning-wheel or loom or both may still be found—perhaps no longer in active use, but stowed away. Some flax is grown, a little cotton, and enough wool to supply the domestic demand. Linen, linsey, cotton, and woollen goods are the products.

The linsey is a durable fabric, the warp or chain being made of cotton and the woof of wool. The women, especially the older ones, often complain of the store dyes, saying they are

injurious to the goods and don't last like the natural dyes. The "kivers" are made of a cotton warp, and the woof has two shuttles, one carrying the white cotton and the other the wool. These "kivers" are the favorite product of the loom. They are heavy coverlets, handed down from generation to generation, and constitute a point in social distinction. Often they are made in crude, gaudy colors—red, white, blue, and yellow. The patterns have much of sameness about them, being handed down from the past, but modified somewhat by individual variations and by store designs. Miss Robinson mentions these as favorite patterns: "chariot-wheels and church windows," "dog-wood blossom and running vine," "cat track," "log cabin," "blooming leaf," "young man's fancy," "rose in the wilderness," and "castle city."

The rapid decline of this fireside industry is most regrettable. It furnished occupation during the long dull winters, and gave a more honest product than the shoddy mill-stuff. It stimulated the latent art impulse. But it is gone, and there is nothing to take its place. Berea College is trying to stimulate its revival by showing the people how good the home-made goods really are, and by finding an outside market for them. It was reported recently that a woman had come twenty-seven miles on horse-back to get a piece of mechanism to repair her loom.

There are some other interesting survivals of a former industrial stage. Grease lamps with floating wicks in a home-made clay vessel, whipsaws instead of saw-mills, and hand-mills instead of power-mills, all suggest a time long past for most of the country.

#### LANGUAGE.

There are some interesting survivals in the speech of the mountain man. One hears today expressions that smack of Chaucer; as, for instance, "hit" for "it," "beasties" for "beasts," "norate" for "announce," "hoped" for "helped," "fotched" for "fetched," "sot" for "set," "drug" for "dragged," "pack" for "carry," "gorm" for "muss," and "feisty" for "impertinent." Professor Vincent says that Professor W. I. Thomas gathered from the daily speech of the mountaineers a list of 300 words

obsolete since about the sixteenth century, or surviving only in the dialects of England.

The names given to towns and streams have no suggestion of England and Chaucer about them. They are undisguisably home-made. Witness such names as : "Stand-around," "None-such," "Quality Valley," "Fair Play," "Squabble Creek," "Stinking Creek," "Fighting Creek," "Lostcreek," "Pigeon-roost," "Troublesome Creek," "Hogskin Creek," "Bullskin Creek," "Greasy Creek," "Cutshin," "Hell-fer-Sartin."

#### RACE TRADITIONS.

In an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February, 1888, Professor Shaler says :

The separation of our frontier folk from their race traditions is well shown by their entire loss of all the folk-lore which their race once possessed. I have been unable to find a trace of the songs and fairy-tales of the old English people among the folk of the southern Alleghanies, who in their customs and character are more closely related to the British yeomanry of the seventeenth century than any other part of our population.

This is only apparently true ; to the visitor no trace of the old ballads and folk-lore remains, but they are there, if one can only unearth them. Mr. C. Rexford Raymond has discovered, among others, the tragic love ballad "Barbara Allen," the tragic ballads "Little Sir Hugh" and "The Romish Lady," and the love ballad called either "Lord Bateman" or "The Turkish Lady."

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[To be continued.]